

Natural Areas

Permit Rules and Regulations



In reference to City of Houston, Texas, Ordinance No. Sec. 32-10: Maintenance or adoption of natural areas.

DEFINITION

A "Natural Area" is defined as an area of native vegetation within planned and managed landscapes to allow the use of such plants in the creation, preservation, or restoration of natural plant communities. Native vegetation for Houston is herein defined as species that occur naturally in southeast Texas.

The following environmentally beneficial landscapes, whether on public or private lands, may be considered natural areas as defined herein:

- Native plantings
- Wildflower plantings
- Wildlife plantings
- Erosion control plantings
- Wooded areas
- Managed governmental programs
- Educational programs
- Passive flood control
- Storm water quality treatment facilities
- Cultivated areas
- Biological control areas
- Landscaping for building soil fertility

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Area must be maintained and managed so that no weeds or debris are allowed to accumulate and create an imminent hazard to health or safety.
2. Unacceptable plants: Weeds are further defined as any noxious, invasive or undesired plants. Weeds shall include but not be limited to the following:

COMMON NAME

Alligatorweed
Common ragweed
Giant ragweed
Giant reed
Javan grape
Field bindweed
Giant dodder
Angleston bluestem
Water hyacinth
Hydrilla

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Alternanthera philoxeroides
Ambrosia sp.
Ambrosia trifida
Arundo donax
Cayratia sp.
Convolvulus arvensis
Cuscuta sp.
Dicanthium aristatum
Eichhornia crassipes
Hydrilla verticillata

Cogongrass	<i>Imperata cylindrica</i>
Kudzu	<i>Kudzu sp.</i>
Chinese privet	<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>
Torpedograss	<i>Panicum repens</i>
Vasey grass	<i>Paspalum urvillei</i>
Poison ivy	<i>Rhus toxicodendron L.</i>
Macartney rose	<i>Rosa bracteata</i>
Giant salvinia	<i>Salvinia molesta</i>
Chinese tallow	<i>Sapium sebiferum</i>
Rattlebush	<i>Sesbania drummondii</i>
Johnson grass	<i>Sorghum halepense (L.) Pers.</i>

3. The area must be regularly mowed so as to prevent uncontrolled vegetation growth within ten feet of public roadway and within five feet of a public sidewalk.
4. The area may be required to maintain a 15-foot wide strip that is regularly mowed as a buffer to adjoining properties.
5. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to supersede any lawful provisions of covenants and restrictions on private property. A Natural Area permit will not supersede property deed restrictions.
6. To apply for a Natural Area permit, complete the Natural Areas Permit Application and detailed drawings of the property indicating layout of plantings and submit to:

Natural Area Coordinator
 Grounds Maintenance Division
 Houston Parks and Recreation Department
 2999 S. Wayside Dr.
 Houston, TX 77023

7. The application will be reviewed and a response (permit or explanation of permit refusal) will be sent within 30 days of receipt.
8. Permits will be issued in one-year terms. Applicants must reapply within 30 days of expiration.
9. Random inspections of permitted natural areas will be conducted by City of Houston, Neighborhood Protection Division, Planning and Development Department.
10. Failure to comply with the rules and regulations as stated above will place the permitted property in violation of City of Houston Ordinance No. Section 10-451: Nuisances, generally.